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GETTY IMAGES

HE'S RUNNING, HE SAYS

A report says Joe Biden is seeking donations for a 2020 run. 6

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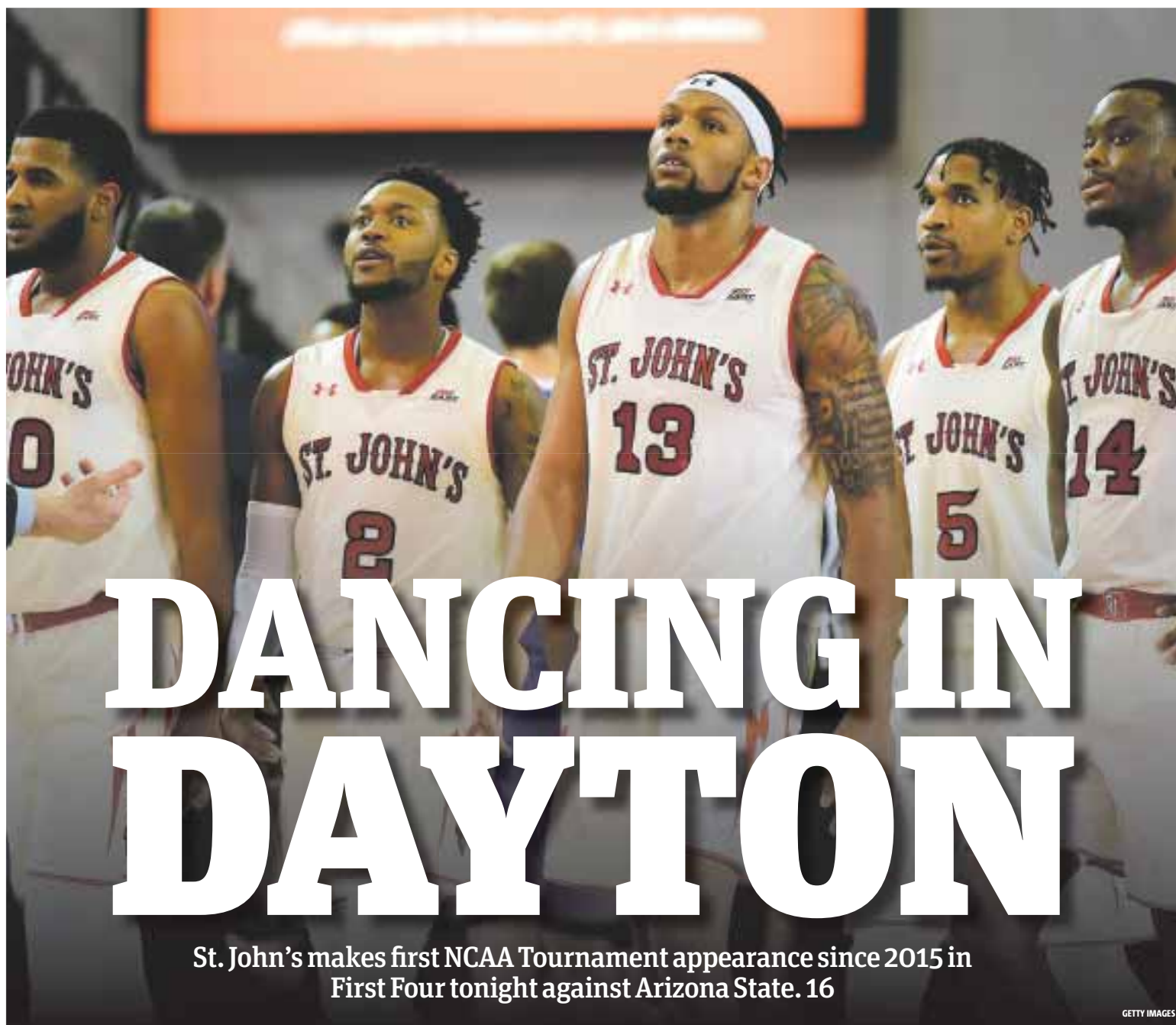
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DANCING IN DAYTON

St. John's makes first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2015 in First Four tonight against Arizona State. 16

GETTY IMAGES

THINGS
TO
KNOW

Google announces Stadia video game service

Google's efforts to popularize games on virtual reality headsets stumbled.

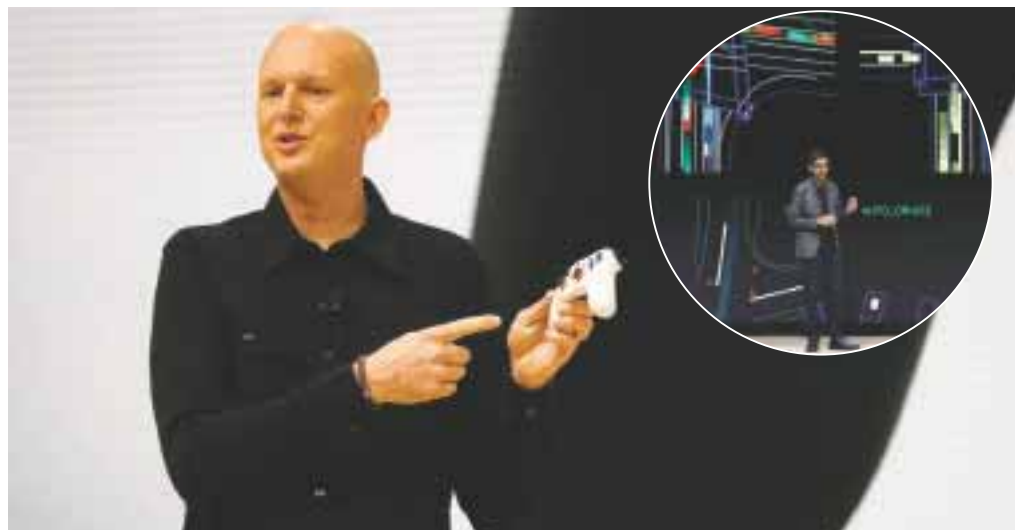
Alphabet Inc.'s Google announced on Tuesday a browser-based video game-streaming service dubbed Stadia that attempts to capitalize on the company's cloud technology and global network of data centers.

The technology allows users to play games through their internet browser without waiting for content to be downloaded to a device, making access to games potentially as easy as watching a video from YouTube. But Google for now offered scant details on pricing

or available titles for the service, which faces potentially tough competition from game publishers and from rivals including Amazon.com and Microsoft.

The "waiting game will be a thing of the past," Phil Harrison, a Google vice president overseeing the new service, said during a keynote presentation on Tuesday in San Francisco at the Game Developers Conference, which is bringing together this week about 25,000 people who work in the video game industry.

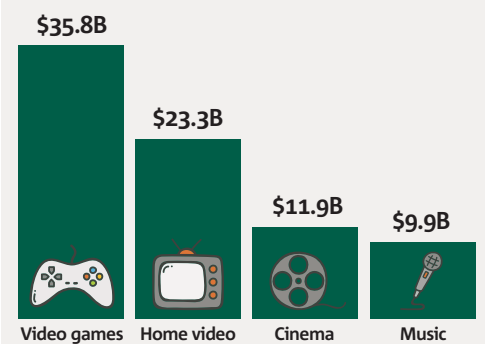
Google said Stadia would launch sometime this year in the United States, Canada and much of Europe. **REUTERS**



STATS

Are you not entertained?

Entertainment industry revenue in the United States in 2018, by segment.



THE NPJ GROUP, SENSOR TOWER, DEG, BOX OFFICE MOJO, RIAA

Trout close to \$430 million extension with Angels

2 Mike Trout is on the verge of a 12-year, \$430 million contract extension with the Los Angeles Angels, ESPN reported Tuesday. Trout, 27, is a two-time American League Most Valuable Player and was scheduled to become a free agent in 2020. The agreement, per ESPN, tacks on 10 years to the final two seasons remaining on Trout's \$144.5 million agreement with the Angels. The deal would smash the massive contract signed by Bryce

Harper — 13 years, \$330 million with the Philadelphia Phillies — on March 2. Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Zack Greinke had the MLB record annual average salary at \$34.4 million. Trout would eclipse that mark with \$36 million AAV. Boxer Canelo Alvarez signed a contract with DAZN worth a minimum of \$365 million. Trout has a 64.3 Wins Above Replacement through his age-26 season, which is far beyond any player at his age in MLB history.

Cohen's emails sought months before raids

3 U.S. investigators sought warrants to read Michael Cohen's emails in July 2017, nine months before the FBI raided the home and office of President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer, according to documents made public on Tuesday. The requests were made six months into Trump's presidency. Emails were sought by Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office as well as by the FBI, dating back as far as June 2015, accord-

ing to the documents. Mueller is investigating Russia's role in the 2016 U.S. election and possible coordination with Trump campaign members. The nearly 900 pages of documents released by a federal judge in New York provide more detailed accounts of Cohen's financial relationships than previously known. Cohen began cooperating with federal investigators soon after the April 2018 raids on his home, office and hotel room.

Trump taps former Delta executive to head FAA

4 President Donald Trump will nominate former Delta Air Lines executive Steve Dickson to head the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the White House said Tuesday, as the aviation agency grapples with fallout from two fatal crashes of Boeing airplanes. Reuters reported on March 8 that Trump was expected to soon nominate Dickson to run the agency that oversees U.S. airspace. Dickson left Delta in October after 27

years. The FAA, which has been run by an acting chief for 14 months, is facing mounting questions over its certification of the Boeing 737 MAX from federal prosecutors and lawmakers. Dickson's nomination had been in the works for months before the March 10 Ethiopian Airlines crash. On Tuesday, the U.S. Transportation Department's inspector general office said it planned to audit the FAA certification of the Boeing 737 MAX.

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NEWS

Statue of Liberty climber sentenced to community service, probation

Therese Patricia Okoumou was sentenced to five years' probation and 200 hours of community service.

A woman convicted of trespassing and disorderly conduct after she climbed the Statue of Liberty's stone pedestal on July 4 last year to protest U.S. immigration policy was sentenced to 200 hours of community service and five years' probation on Tuesday.

Therese Patricia Okoumou arrived at her sentencing hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Gabriel Gorenstein in Manhattan with her whole face in clear tape, wearing a headband that said "I CARE." She removed the tape

after Gorenstein said he would not proceed otherwise.

Okoumou was arrested after she scaled the base of the statue and began a three-hour standoff with police that led to the evacuation of Liberty Island on one of the landmark's busiest days of the year.

She and her lawyer, Ron Kuby, later said her act of civil disobedience was primarily to demonstrate against the Trump administration's policy of separating migrant children from parents caught crossing the U.S. border illegally.

Administration officials said the policy was needed to secure the border, but it was ended in June after images of separated youngsters held in cage-like detention facilities sparked a furor both at home and abroad.

"This case is a fight



REUTERS

against injustice," Okoumou, a U.S. citizen born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, said before she was sentenced in a courtroom packed with her supporters. "Well into the 21st century, some are

justifying the caging of migrant children."

Prosecutors had asked that Okoumou spend at least a month in prison. Gorenstein said that was unnecessary to deter her from committing crimes, but

he rebuked her for putting the lives of her rescuers in danger.

"A person with some empathy might have said today, 'I'm sorry that I risked the lives of others,'" the judge said.

Gorenstein said he

would consider a motion to end the probation early if Okoumou adhered to its terms.

Kuby said at the hearing that Okoumou had recently been offered a job at the nonprofit Salvage Art Institute. REUTERS

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Doctors Urge Knee Pain Sufferers

“Don’t Get ANY Surgery Until You See This...”

After Years Of Intense Study, NYC Medical Clinic Finally Reveals It’s Best “Treatment Formula” For Helping Knee Arthritis Sufferers... Especially When So Many Other Treatments Have Failed

NEW YORK CITY - If you are even remotely interested in discovering how the latest scientific discoveries can possibly help your knee pain... then this is going to be the most exciting information you ever read.

Here is why: Knee pain can not only be brutal... it’s complex. In other words, it’s not a simple, easy fix.

But I’m sure you already know that. Or you wouldn’t be reading this.

That’s the bad news.

Now for some good news...

Over the years, *NYC Pain MD* has treated countless knee pain sufferers. And in that time have been able to constantly improve.

And we have come up with a treatment formula that we have found works best and helps the most patients.

This formula has reduced or even eliminated the pain in many. Some were scheduled for knee replacement surgery and felt good enough to cancel their surgery.

It’s amazing when patients who were once in excruciating pain... start feeling better. And start walking again. And playing golf. Or tennis. And finally getting their lives back.

Especially when they had gone to other doctors and tried so many other things.

So many had given up hope.

Sound familiar? If it does... check this out...

The Treatment Formula

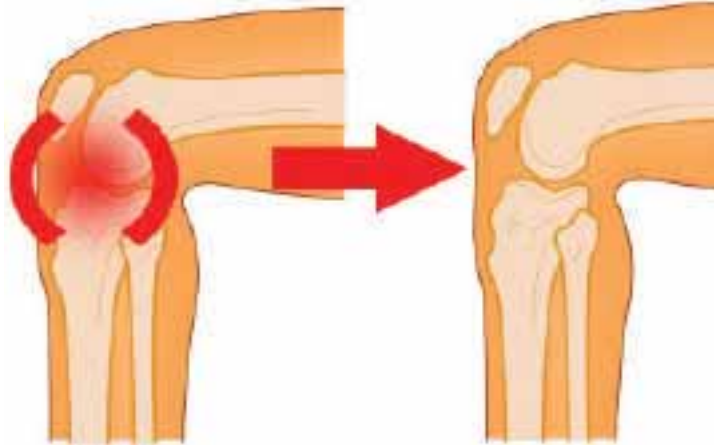
While I can’t give you the entire treatment formula here (there is not enough space and WAY too complicated) I can give you the basics. And more important... I can tell you what it might be able to do for YOU.

The first and most important part of the formula is: **PATIENT SELECTION.**

This means, *NYC Pain MD* has a detailed screening process to tell who is most likely to be helped by their treatments... and who is not.

If you qualify, you have the opportunity to move forward and experience the worldclass treatments that *NYC Pain MD* offers.

If you do not, *NYC Pain MD* will tell you what they think your best options are and help



NYC Pain MD “**Treatment Formula**” A protocol of advanced medical treatments that has already helped thousands.

you find the right doctor for you.

If you qualify, *NYC Pain MD* offers some of the most advanced medical treatments available today all using the most advanced imaging technology including:

- Viscosupplementation (gel injections)
- Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)
- Stem Cell Therapy (Lipogems)
- Genicular Knee Block
- And more.

Once again, there is not enough space to go into detail about all these procedures... but here are some things you **MUST KNOW...**

Viscosupplementation is where a doctor introduces a gel-like medicine directly into the joint space. This helps to lubricate the joints often relieving some, most or even all of your pain. Results can last for 6 months to several years.

Many have had these treatments *without* good results. However, *NYC Pain MD* feels this is because doctors often do these “gel injections” without advanced imaging to guide them. Research shows they will often miss the joint. If the joint is missed... it is impossible for the treatment to work.

NYC Pain MD has spared no expense and used advanced imaging to guide the injections assuring the medicine gets into the joint. We frequently get results when this treatment was a failure done elsewhere.

The second thing you must know is... our treatment plans are custom made for every patient. And we have all these treatments

offered in the same place. Many times you will get the best results from multiple treatments. At *NYC Pain MD* your doctors will all be there and will all know each other and you and your case. They work together and give you the best treatments and care without you having to go anywhere else.

The ability to select the right patients and then have the potential to give them any or all of these treatments... with all the necessary medical technology... under one roof... has allowed *NYC Pain MD* to get better results than they thought possible.

Here’s What You Should Do Next

If you suffer with knee pain... and any of this made sense to you... *NYC Pain MD* would like to offer you a No-cost screening. That screening is the first step in our “Treatment Formula.”

You will get to see a doctor and ask any questions you have. Your doctor will take the first steps to see if you qualify for treatments and give you recommendations.

The best thing is... you will finally get direction. You will know what’s going on and what is your best course of action... step-by-step. The treatments will be explained in detail and you will breathe a big sigh of relief finally knowing what’s going on and what can or cannot be done.

There is so much we want to say to help you... but I’m out of space. Give us a call at **877-296-6310** and take the first step. That step is free without obligation.



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Former U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden.

GETTY IMAGES

Joe Biden is running in 2020, says Joe Biden, reports say

In the last few days, the former vice president has dropped some fairly big hints.



MICHAEL MARTIN
letters@metro.us

He's running.

No, it's not quite the satiric Twitter meme (a leftover from the 2016 race, in which commentators attempted to parse potential candidates' vague-yet-grand statements that really weren't that vague at all): Joe Biden really appears to be planning a 2020 run, according to Joe Biden.

In the last few days, the former vice president has twice indicated that he will join the race, via a slip and a leak. Or perhaps two leaked "slips." Or maybe three. On Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal reported that Biden had reached out to several major supporters that day, telling them he planned to run for president. He asked for help in securing contributions from big donors so he could quickly raise several million dollars.

Over the weekend, Biden teased a run with an apparent slip of the tongue during a Democratic fundraiser in his home state of Delaware.

"It can't go on like this, folks. I know I get criticized and told I get criticized by the new left," he told the crowd. "I have the most progressive record of anybody running for the United States — anybody who would run."

In the polls, Biden, 76, has consistently ranked first among potential Democratic presidential candidates. He has officially sat on the sidelines as the field coalesced around him. But last week, things came at him fast. "Biden has expressed concern to these people that he wouldn't be able to raise millions of dollars in online donations immediately the way some other Democratic candidates have," the Journal said about that call with potential backers.

Last Thursday, former Texas Congressman Beto O'Rourke officially announced he would run. Twenty-four hours later, O'Rourke had raised \$6.1 million, a record, beating Sen. Bernie Sanders' \$5.9 million first-day haul last month.

On the call, Biden told supporters he had to show results early and would be judged by the initial rush of donations, the Journal reported. Biden indicated he might set up an exploratory committee sometime after Easter

weekend.

In addition to two terms as President Barack Obama's VP from 2008 to 2016, Biden was a senator from Delaware from 1973 to 2009. He unsuccessfully ran for president in 1988 and 2008. Supporters say the former vice president has experience and a common touch that could peel voters away from President Trump; detractors contend his establishment reputation will fail to excite a progressive base that's seeking change, particularly minorities and women.

On Monday, CNN reported that Biden might choose a running mate early. Stirring speculation, he met last week with former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams, who delivered January's State of the Union response. But the two reportedly did not discuss the VP slot.

In the current Democratic presidential fray — which now numbers more than a dozen — Biden leads the RealClearPolitics average of polls with 29 percent, followed by Sanders at 22 percent. Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) is third with 11 percent, while Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and O'Rourke take the next two spots with about 7 percent each.

The fight against erectile dysfunction

Don't worry. It happens.
But there are ways to stop it!
By Pat King

Many men deal with the awkward physical disability commonly known as erectile dysfunction. As a matter of fact, it may be a more common drawback for more men than you may think. According to a study conducted by the Cleveland Clinic, roughly 52 percent of men experience erectile dysfunction in their day-to-day lives, with 40 percent of men age 40 experience it and 70 percent of men age 70. So what are some ways that you can combat this ... gulp... disappointing condition that affects so many men in the bedroom?

Eat and live right

As with many ailments, erectile dysfunction can be closely related to how much you exercise and how well you eat on a daily basis.

In a nutshell — by getting the right amount of cardio during the week, you will maintain a lower blood pressure which can help you to achieve healthier erections when it matters the most.

Eating right can also contribute to lowering your blood pressure with food like dark chocolate, pistachios, and watermelon all linked to lowering cholesterol and increasing the blood flow in the right areas. Some bad news for those who like the drink a few cocktails from time to time however is that drinking to excess has historically been linked to cases of erectile dysfunction. So try to cut back if you want to see improvements down there.

The importance of a healthy diet cannot be overstated in cases of erectile dysfunction as WebMD found It is estimated that around "35-75% of men with diabetes will experience at least some degree of erectile

dysfunction during their lifetime." On top of that, men with diabetes will develop ED 10 to 15 years before men without diabetes.

Cut out the problem at the root

While many pills and contraptions have been touted as the end all be all cures of this worrisome condition, few have produced the same exciting restorative results as the ErectionWave treatment. Created by board certified urologist, Dr. David Shusterman, this new innovative treatment has taken a different approach to this issue than, say, swallowing a couple viagras on a nightly basis. The most exciting aspect of this treatment is that it actually works to cure the real issues behind ED and not offering a temporary solution. By directing high frequency rays towards blood vessels that have been blocked, ErectionWave treatment

will increase blood through these pathways to allow for stronger and longer lasting natural erections without the assistance of pills or useless penis pumps.

Another more direct erectile dysfunction cure is known as the Priapus Shot — or otherwise known simply as the "P-shot". This completely pain-free shot has been known to not only increase sex drive but increase the overall penis size to 3.5 centimeters. The shot gets these results by by kickstarting a man's own growth factors in his blood to recruit his body's own stem cells down to the penis causing quicker regeneration of tissue and blood vessels.

If you are interested in either of these groundbreaking treatments, make your appointment with Dr. Shusterman today by calling 212-661-0060.



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REUTERS

Students tied to admissions scandal could face expulsion

USC is deciding the fate of students linked to the largest college-admissions cheating scandal in U.S. history.

The University of Southern California said it may expel students linked to the largest college-admissions cheating scandal in U.S. history after it completes a review of their records.

The school said on Monday night that it has already "placed holds on the accounts of students who may be associated with the alleged admissions scheme," preventing them from registering for classes or acquiring transcripts.

"Following the review, we will take the proper action related to their status, up to revoking admission or expulsion," the college said in a tweet on Monday night.

The move would affect the daughters of "Full House" actress Lori Loughlin and fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli. The parents were among 50 people charged last week with participation in what

federal prosecutors called a \$25 million bribery and fraud scam.

The mastermind of the scheme last week pleaded guilty to racketeering charges for bribing coaches, cheating on standardized tests and fabricating athletic profiles to help children of wealthy families gain admission to top universities including Yale, Stanford and Georgetown.

"Following the review, we will take the proper action related to their status, up to revoking admission or expulsion."

The University of Southern California

A spokesman for Georgetown on Tuesday said the school would not comment on disciplinary action against individual students linked to the scandal but added that it is "reviewing the details of the indictment, examining our records, and will

be taking appropriate action."

Yale, UCLA, and the University of Texas said last week that any students found to have misrepresented any part of their applications may have their admission rescinded. Stanford said it is "working to better understand the circumstances around" one of its students linked to the scheme.

Wake Forest's president said in a statement last week, "We have no reason to believe the student was aware of the alleged financial transaction."

Prosecutors said some students involved in the scandal were not aware that their parents had made the alleged arrangements, although in other cases they knowingly took part. None of the children were charged.

Several celebrities and corporate executives charged in the scandal have already felt career consequences.

The Hallmark cable channel last week cut ties with Loughlin for her alleged role in the fraud. REUTERS

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REUTERS

Peloton sued for using songs by Katy Perry, Rihanna, other artists

Ten publishers are seeking more than \$150 million in damages.

Publishers representing the writers of songs by Bruno Mars, Katy Perry, Rihanna, Justin Timberlake, Carrie Underwood and hundreds of other artists sued Peloton Interactive Inc. on Tuesday, accusing the maker of video-streaming stationary bicycles of copyright infringement.

In a complaint filed in Manhattan federal court, the 10 publishers are seeking more than \$150 million in damages, accusing Peloton of exploiting their songs by using more than 1,000 in its videos without permission.

They said Peloton must stop “trampling” their rights by using their songs for free. They noted that the company having obtained song licenses from other publishers showed it “fully understood what the

copyright law required.”

Peloton, in a statement, said it is reviewing the complaint. It also said it has “great respect for songwriters and artists,” and has “invested heavily to build a best-in-breed reporting and licensing system.”

The New York-based company is expected to seek a more than \$4 billion valuation in an initial public offering that could occur in the second half of 2019, The Wall Street Journal said.

Founded in 2012, Peloton sells bicycles starting at \$2,245, in packages that it said require signing up for memberships to access live and on-demand classes for cycling, running, yoga and other activities. Access to unlimited classes costs \$39 a month.

The 10 music publishers include Big Deal Music, Downtown Music Publishing, Ole, Peermusic, Pulse Music Publishing, Reservoir, The Richmond

Organization, Round Hill, Royalty Network and Ultra Music.

They said Peloton’s infringements cover songs by a who’s who of the music industry, such as the unauthorized use of Rihanna’s “Umbrella” in at least 55 workout videos.

The list of alleged infringements includes such songs as Mars’ “Grenade,” Perry’s “Roar,” Timberlake’s “SexyBack” and Underwood’s “Before He Cheats.” It also includes older songs such as Celine Dion’s version of John Lennon and Yoko Ono’s “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” Rush’s “Tom Sawyer” and Bobby “Boris” Pickett’s Halloween staple “Monster Mash.”

David Israelite, chief executive of the National Music Publishers’ Association, a trade group representing the plaintiffs, in a statement said music was responsible for much of Peloton’s business success. **REUTERS**

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Pat King
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wich and they pull out a spoon and put 2 level spoons of the tuna mix on the sandwich bread which they proceed to flatten into the bread. Thickness of a potato chip almost.

They then expect you to ask for the salad portion. Well, I ALWAYS THOUGHT the TUNA should be the main ingredient so am stuck with asking for a minor amount of lettuce and a few black olives to get some sort of taste. And you land up with a tasteless mess. Finally gave up tuna and focused on meatball which has some taste with a bit of bbq sauce but who knows what they are made of! Then, the prices went up and they no longer had a sandwich of the day and I stopped going.

By Margaret, Metro US reader

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Taurus If you take the initiative, you will earn respect, recognition and a chance to get ahead. An ambitious approach to life, love and happiness will attract positive people and opportunities.



Gemini Make improving your life and relationships your first priority. Stick to the facts when dealing with others, and question anyone you feel is exaggerating.



Cancer A change will turn out to be better than anticipated. Look on the bright side to discover options you didn't know existed. A joint venture will lead to improvements.



Leo Don't let a disagreement turn into a physical confrontation. Go about your business and stay out of other people's affairs. Personal growth is encouraged, along with a smarter health regimen.



Virgo Take the plunge and learn something new. Expanding your knowledge and skills will give you greater power over opportunities to earn more money.



Libra Make today about you and the people you love. Enjoy activities or events that make you feel relaxed and decrease stress. Distance yourself from negativity, arguments and criticism.



Scorpio Take a break and do something interesting, creative or adventurous. Embrace a chance to improve your personal life. Collaborate with like-minded people and walk away from those who cause chaos and discord.



Sagittarius Emotional situations will cause havoc. Don't make assumptions. Time alone will give you the chance to figure out what's fact and what's false. Make personal growth a priority.



Capricorn Money, contracts and legal matters should be dealt with quickly. Investments, real estate or home improvements are favored. Take care of matters personally and avoid someone trying to take advantage of you.



Aquarius Stick close to the people you know and feel comfortable with. Don't get involved with anyone who wants you to overspend or indulge in pastimes that could be hazardous to your health.



Pisces Spend time with someone who motivates you. The more compromises you establish and the fewer burdens put on you or someone else, the better the outcome. EUGENIA LAST

LIFESTYLE



ALL PHOTOS REUTERS

Poppy apocalypse: Crowds descend on California city to see ‘*superbloom*’

Spring has arrived in Southern California and with it a crisis has blossomed in the small city of Lake Elsinore, where tens of thousands of visitors have flocked to see a “superbloom” of poppies in a desert canyon.

The rare profusion of orange poppies in Walker Canyon, set in the Temescal Mountains and accessible on foot via a trail, owes thanks to above-average rainfall in the arid region. The profusion of tourists in Lake Elsinore, located about 70 miles southeast of

downtown Los Angeles, apparently owes thanks to the popularity of Instagram.

The hashtag #superbloom had been used more than 100,000 times on Instagram by Monday.

The city of 63,300 has seen 50,000 tourists from around the country and as far away as Europe come to the 3.5-mile trail in Walker Canyon over the last two weeks to take in the orange flowers carpeting the surrounding hills.

The crowds have been so overwhelming that

the city of Lake Elsinore shut Walker Canyon for a day to staunch the tourist flood and declared a public safety crisis. The city reopened Walker Canyon on Monday.

“This year’s is substantially larger than we’ve ever seen in terms of the numbers of flowers and the numbers of visitors,” Lake Elsinore City Hall spokeswoman Nicole Dailey said. The previous superbloom occurred in 2017.

The droves of people who started coming earlier this month prompt-

ed the city to start a shuttle service to Walker Canyon to ease traffic. This past weekend, tourists began lining up for the shuttle at 5:30 a.m., Dailey said, and wait times rose to two hours.

Some local residents have expressed outrage at the crowds and resulting gridlock, dubbing the superbloom season the “Poppy Apocalypse.” The hashtags #PoppyNightmare and #IsitOverYet have also popped up on social media.

“We know it has been miserable and has caused

unnecessary hardships for our entire community,” a posting on the city’s Facebook page on Sunday said.

Lake Elsinore Mayor Steve Manos wrote on Facebook on Saturday that a city employee was struck by a hit-and-run driver at the site, and a tourist was bitten by a rattlesnake.

Lake Elsinore has enlisted the help of the California Highway Patrol, the county sheriff’s office, neighboring cities and private contractors to manage traffic around

Walker Canyon, which has no designated public parking.

Rain in the forecast this week might deter some tourists from coming—or it could cause even more poppies to bloom and attract even more tourists. Dailey said she hoped wet weather would bring some relief for locals.

“We did not expect the crowds that we saw,” she said. “Our freeways and our cities are not designed for crowds that you see in L.A.” **GABRIELLA BORTER**



Robots compete with child jockeys in Egyptian camel races



Mohamed Mostafa, a Bedouin breeder, fixes a robot jockey on his camel before the 18th International Camel Racing festival at the Sarabium desert in Ismailia, Egypt, March 12, 2019. **AMR ABDALLAH DALSH**

Remote-controlled robot jockeys lined up at a major camel-racing festival in northeastern Egypt, as owners came under pressure from campaigns to stop using child riders.

Organizers fielded around 20 robots—child-size devices with a whipping arm that can be triggered at a distance—alongside dozens of real children as part of a trial run.

“God willing, in a year, there will be no human jockeys, except for some adults for the sake of tradition,” said EidHamdan Hassan, head of the Egyptian Camel Federation, which organized the festival in the Sarabium desert of Ismailia.

Several Gulf countries have banned child jockeys from the traditional Bedouin sport after rights groups said the youngsters were often injured and some had been abducted or sold by their families.

Owners at last week’s Egyptian event said the bans had prevented them from fielding teams in Gulf festivals—and they hoped the move to robots would help them get in.

Esam el-Din Atiyah, president of the African Camel Racing Federation, which includes Egypt, acknowledged that child

riders were sometimes injured. “Human rights organizations have said that this is child exploitation,” he said.

He personally wanted Egypt to move to robot-only events, but the transition was costly and would take time, he added.

Young jockeys at the event—local children mostly aged 6-13—defended the tradition and their participation.

Sayed Mohamed, 11, said children were better than robots at steering.

“The camel might lean sideways. We [the children] are better at riding leaning camels so that we can straighten its route.”

“The robot works well with camels that don’t tend to lean.”

Around 150 camels competed in eight categories over distances from five to 15 km, cheered on by more than 1,000 spectators.

Local tribes prepare their best camels with a special diet of beans, barley, date paste and milk.

Victory raises a camel’s value. “When a camel wins, you sell it for a good price - from 150,000 to 200,000 Egyptian pounds (\$8,700-\$11,600),” said camel owner Mohamed Mostafa. “The camel that doesn’t win is sold for only 10,000.” **AMR DALSH**

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The curious case of tainted milk from a Maine dairy farm

For Maine dairy farmer Fred Stone, the discovery in 2016 that his cows were producing tainted milk has since brought financial ruin and threatened to shut down a century-old family business.

Now state regulators and health experts are investigating whether the contamination could reflect a much broader problem for farms that used similar methods to fertilize their land.

The chemicals on Stone's farm likely came from biosolids, or nutrient-rich sewage from municipal utilities, that he spread across his fields, according to a report last year by Maine's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The chemicals are known as perfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS — some of which have been linked to cancers, liver damage, low birth weight and other health problems.

The discovery of contaminated sites

in Maine and around the country prompted Maine Gov. Janet Mills this month to form a task force to study the extent of PFAS contamination and suggest protective measures. The state DEP says testing for the chemicals is underway at more than 95 sites.

"Staff has been specifically working on identifying farms statewide that may have received sludge and identifying the original source," department spokesman David Madore said in a statement to Reuters.

Patrick MacRoy, deputy director at the Maine-based Environmental Health Strategy Center, said the contamination at the Stoneridge Farm raises questions about the safety of biosolids used at farms nationwide.

"The Stone case is incredibly troubling because the source of exposure — waste sludge — is something that is also spread across hundreds of farms in Maine and thousands nationally,"



he said.

Experts said that far more research is needed to determine how sludge-spreading programs may be contributing to contamination of ground-water, crops, or finished products such as milk.

Alan Bjerga, a spokesman for the National Milk Producers Federation, said that his organization believed the Stoneridge case to be an isolated event.

"We see no wide threat to the milk sup-

ply," he said in a statement.

Grease and water-repellent PFAS have been used for decades in cookware, specialty paper, fabrics, firefighting foam and other products. State and federal regulators have been scrambling to set safety standards for human exposure to some of the chemical compounds.

Scores of lawsuits have been filed in pollution cases seeking billions of dollars from chemical manufacturers and industrial PFAS users. Two major cases have already settled in recent years for a combined \$1.5 billion.

'FOREVER CHEMICALS'

Stone and his wife Laura run the Stoneridge Farm on 100 acres of land in southern Maine, one of the hundreds of small-scale dairy operations across the U.S. Northeast prized for the

quality of their milk, cream and butter.

Concerns about PFAS in the farm's milk first arose in 2016, when the local water district found the pollutants — often referred to as "forever chemicals" because they don't break down easily — in a well it maintained on the Stones' land.

Stoneridge informed its milk distributor, Oakhurst, and the state DEP. Additional tests found high levels of PFAS in Stoneridge's milk, soil, hay and cow manure.

The Environmental Protection Agency has said that biosolids-spreading programs are active in all 50 states. In Maine, 66 sites are currently permitted for sludge spreading, according to state data.

The numbers were higher during the years Stoneridge participated in the state-sponsored waste-spreading program, between 1983 and 2004. Data compiled in 2000 by the Toxics Action Network, an environmental group, showed that 226 sites, mostly farms, had sludge-spreading permits.

Much of the regulatory push around PFAS so far has focused on water. In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency set a lifetime "health advisory" for two of the compounds — PFOS and PFOA, which a growing body of research has linked to health problems. The EPA recommended that drinking water should

contain no more than 70 parts per trillion of these chemicals combined.

There's no federal standard for safe levels in milk. But Maine public health officials said in 2017 that milk with PFOS exceeding 210 parts per trillion should be considered "adulterated" and banned from sale.

FADING FAMILY TRADITION

Fred Stone, 63, fears he's nearing the end of a century-old family tradition. The contamination ordeal has already put him in \$500,000 of debt, he said. He's considering selling some land and looking for a job.

Until a few weeks ago, Stone was still trying to salvage his dairy operation. He purchased several dozen new cows, installed a \$20,000 water-filtration system and stopped using his farm's hay for feed.

The effort at first seems to work. Last year, test results on his farm's milk came back clean, and he was allowed to sell milk to Oakhurst again. But PFOS reappeared in the milk within months, causing distributor Oakhurst to permanently end its business relationship with Stoneridge.

"When they dropped us, that was the end of our milk market," Stone said. "So that was the end of us." **RICHARD VALDMANIS AND JOSHUA SCHNEYER**

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Aja McClanahan, a Chicago-based writer, and her husband were staring down \$120,000 in debt — about \$20,000 of it credit card balances — and realized they needed to clean house. Literally.

They found less expensive housing arrangements, and along the way in those seven years that they carried the debt, they also became meticulous about budgeting. They negotiated some of the debt with a creditor, as well, and in 2013, the couple paid off the six-figure total.

That tidier balance sheet helped them tackle other goals.

"Currently, we are very debt-averse," says McClanahan, writer at finance blog Principles of Increase. "The only exception is using small amounts of debt to finance our real estate business."

If you, too, need to sweep away piled-up debt, here's how to employ similar cleansing strategies.

1. Unpack your motivation

McClanahan kept a goal in mind

McClanahan kept a goal in mind. "Every day I was fantasizing: 'When we pay off debt, we're going to go to the Caribbean,'" she says.

After paying it off, the couple did just that, heading to the Dominican Republic in 2015 for a two-and-a-half-week vacation with their two children.

That experience conquering debt also gave the couple confidence to envision new goals, some of which, yes, required

Steps to spring-clean your credit card debt

taking on debt again — but with a plan.

The couple financed bathroom renovations for their rental property in 2017 by charging over \$2,500 to their credit card. They were able to pay off the balance a few months before the end of the 0% introductory interest period on a balance transfer card.

2. Prioritize the polishing

The average U.S. household with credit card debt has an estimated \$6,929 in revolving balances, or balances carried from one month to the next, according to a 2018 NerdWallet study. If your debt is spread out over several accounts, prioritize in a way that makes sense for you.

McClanahan and her husband took the “debt snowball” approach, which calls for paying down smaller

balances first to gather momentum with quick wins.

Others may prefer to start by targeting debts with the highest interest rates, known as the "debt avalanche" method.

Either way, you'll need to free up cash to put toward those balances. Sort through your monthly statements for expenses that might be weighing you down: a higher-than-necessary cable bill, a membership you no longer use, etc.

3. Choose the right

cleaning solution
Depending on your credit score, you may qualify for a few debt-cleaning options: **Balance-transfer credit card.** With a good credit score of 690 or higher, you can transfer debt from a high-interest credit card to one with a lower annual percentage rate. To pay off her bathroom renovation, McClanahan looked for a balance transfer credit card with no annual fee and a long 0% introduc-

tory APR. Such cards typically charge a balance transfer fee — from 3% to 5% of the amount transferred — although it's possible to find cards that don't. For McClanahan, it was worth paying the fee in exchange for the lengthy interest-free

period.

Personal loan.

You can consolidate your debt from several credit cards into a personal loan that offers a lower interest rate. Consider one at a credit union that's easy to join. They generally have lower interest rates than banks do.

Credit card interest negotiation.

If you pay on time and haven't maxed out your cards, a call to your is-

suers might get them to lower your interest rate. Some creditors are more flexible than others, but persistence can pay off, Nitzsche says.

Credit card hardship program.

If your debt is spiraling because of circumstances out of your control, ask your issuer about a credit card hardship program. You'll need a good reason to qualify, such as job loss or illness. It sometimes results in the

account being closed, but the issuer might lower interest payments.

Debt management plan.

This option is ideal if your credit score falls below 689 or if you're three to five years away from paying off your debt. For a fee, a credit counseling agency can facilitate a debt management plan that combines several debts into one monthly payment, possibly with a lower interest rate.

MELISSA LAMBARENA

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SPORTS

Tourney time for St. John's

Johnnies looking to move on and face No. 6 Buffalo in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.



JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

Once the mecca of the basketball world, the sight of New York City's game on the collegiate and professional levels for most of this millennium has been a pitiful one.

While the Nets are helping restore some promise in Brooklyn as they fight to hold on to an Eastern Conference playoff spot, the Knicks remain an embarrassment around the NBA, though brighter times look to be a certainty in the very near future, whether it

comes in the form of a top draft pick or a free-agent shopping spree.

At a purer level (though the NCAA is one of the most corrupt organizations on the planet), St. John's is providing some much-needed life to the Big Apple's basketball landscape as the Red Storm help kick off the 2019 NCAA Tournament in Dayton, Ohio, on Wednesday night with a First Four matchup against Arizona State.

The two schools are competing for the No. 11 seed in the West Region, where the winner goes on to face No. 6 Buffalo in the round of 64.

It's a rare trip to the Big Dance for St. John's, a program that was once one of the jewels of the Big East back in the 1980s — a time when Madison Square Garden was still the epicenter of the game.

But the Red Storm's relevancy extended far before the glory days of the Big East. After legendary



St. John's faces Arizona State in the First Four tonight. GETTY IMAGES

head coach Lou Carnesecca took over the program in 1965, St. John's made the NCAA Tournament 19 times in 24 seasons. The Queens school didn't hit its highest peak, though, until the mid-'80s when a national standout guard in Chris Mullin helped St. John's to a Sweet 16 appearance in 1983 and a

run to the Final Four in 1985.

While Mark Jackson ensured the school remained on the map after Mullin's departure, St. John's quickly faded to irrelevancy after Carnesecca left the program in 1992.

Over the next 26 seasons, with coaches rang-

ing from Fran Fraschilla to Mike Jarvis and Steve Lavin, St. John's made the NCAA Tournament just seven times. That number plummeted to just three since 2000.

In an attempt to bring back some of that old-school mojo, St. John's brought on Mullin as its head coach in 2015, which looked like a questionable decision when he was met by three successive losing seasons. But with the returning Shamorie Ponds (19.5 PPG) along with a duo of supporting scorers in Mustapha Heron (14.9 PPG) and LJ Figueroa (14.3 PPG), Year 4 was expected to end a three-year tournament drought.

It wasn't easy.

After starting the season 14-1 behind an easy out-of-conference schedule, the Johnnies began to sink during the Big East portion of their campaign. They went 6-10 in their final 16 games, 15 of them coming in conference play. A 32-point loss to No.

23 Marquette — a team they beat twice during the regular season — in the Big East Tournament quarterfinals only damaged hopes of reaching the tournament.

For a team whose strength of its non-conference schedule was ranked 214th in the nation (69th overall) along with a NET rating of 72nd, a 21-12 record was going to fall under siege by the selection committee.

It was just enough, and by the skin of their teeth, as St. John's received the final at-large bid by the committee on Selection Sunday.

Arizona State provides a similar résumé to St. John's. The Sun Devils had three Quadrant 1 wins compared to St. John's' four, along with a strength of schedule that was ranked 70th and a NET rating ranked 63rd in the nation.

Check out how the teams stack up against each other below:

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Mets let Gio Gonzalez just walk to Yankees

The New York Yankees agreed to a minor-league deal with veteran left-handed starting pitcher Gio Gonzalez on Monday night. The deal could be worth as much as \$12 million if he makes the major-league roster and earns a number of incentives.

It's a logical depth signing for general manager Brian Cashman, who has seen a fair share of misfortune already fall upon his starting rotation.

Luis Severino, the Yankees' ace, will be out until at least May due to shoulder inflammation. He became the second Yankees starter to start the 2019 season on the injured list as CC Sabathia underwent an angioplasty and right-knee surgery this offseason. He is expected to make a return in mid-to-late April.

Gonzalez provides a veteran arm to the equation now, although it is



Gio Gonzalez signed a minor-league deal with the Yankees on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

an inconsistent one. The 33-year-old is a two-time all-star who once led the National League with 21 wins to go with a 2.89 ERA back in 2012 with the Washington Nationals. Since then, he's been close to a .500 pitcher, going 68-57 with a 3.72

ERA.

Starting last season with Washington, Gonzalez was on pace for one of the worst seasons of his career as he went 7-11 with a 4.57 ERA. He was traded at the deadline to the Milwaukee Brewers where he rediscovered

his stuff, going 3-0 with a 2.13 ERA in five starts.

His finish to the 2019 season seemingly provided enough promise for the Yankees to take a chance on him, though it is a change of tune for Cashman.

"We're going to rely

on what we have here in camp and be open to any opportunities that present themselves that make sense," Cashman said on March 6 after Severino went down. "What I've got is what I've got, and we're comfortable with that... You can't rule anything out, but I'd say the main focus is what we have."

Severino's timetable being pushed back to May is what likely forced Cashman to hit the open market to find a stopgap. It's one thing to have an inexperienced arm like Domingo German, Jonathan Loaisiga or Chance Adams make a spot start. It's something else entirely to roll one of them out every fifth day for more than a month in a hotly-contested division like the American League East.

While the Yankees added some security for the rotation, the cross-town-rival Mets have been nowhere to be

found. The Queens club lacks legitimate rotational depth behind the five-some of Jacob deGrom, Noah Syndergaard, Zack Wheeler, Steven Matz, and Jason Vargas.

Seth Lugo and Robert Gsellman, once starters, are expected to be exclusive members of the bullpen in 2019, which leaves the team with the likes of Chris Flexen and Corey Oswalt, two younger right-handers who have career ERAs over 5.80 (Flexen's is a whopping 8.45).

Gonzalez, like Clay Buchholz, Wade Miley and Ervin Santana before him, all would have provided important, cheap signings to ensure the rotation doesn't collapse should one of the Mets' starters run into injury problems.

If history suggests anything, it would be foolish to think all five arms are going to stay healthy in 2019.

JOE PANTORNO

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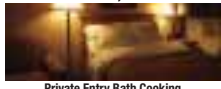
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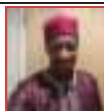
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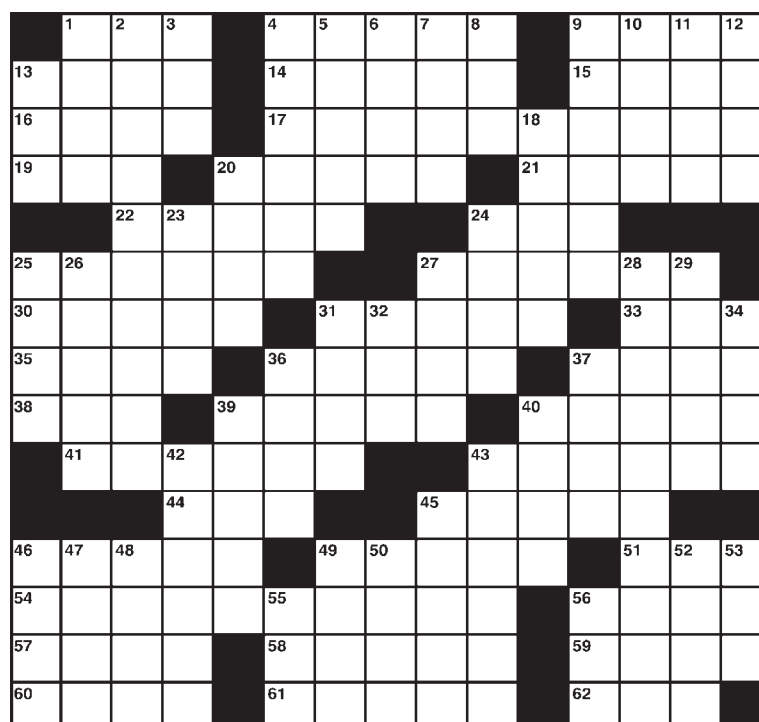
- 1 Handle clumsily
4 Male animals
9 Demonstrate
13 Fictional captain
14 ___-cotta; Chia pet material
15 Dad
16 Game broadcaster
17 Catches again
19 Homer Simpson's remark
20 "Sweet ___ from Pike"
21 Amphitheater
22 Word with coffee or setter
24 Source of light & heat
25 Things done routinely
27 Neighbor of Colorado
30 Wonderland visitor
31 Kick out
33 Word in 4 U.S. state names
35 Cranny; recess
36 On the ___; not working right
37 Actress Plato
38 Wildebeest
39 Musical group
40 Plum or purple
41 Prose writings

- 43 Starving
44 To each ___ own
45 Rudely brief
46 Bricklayer
49 "Been __, done that"
51 Sault __, Marie
54 Honest
56 One not to be trusted
57 Classic board game
58 Blazing
59 Unpleasant
60 ___ out; betray
61 King or emperor
62 180° from WNW

DOWN

- 1 Colombia's dollar
2 Able to live on land or in water
3 Was victorious
4 Tension
5 Fangs
6 Circle portions
7 Hair color
8 Maple tree secretion
9 Rejects disdainfully
10 Long-eared animal
11 Remove the lid from
12 "Old King Cole ___ merry old soul..."

- 13 TV's "___ and Stacey"
18 Jeer at
20 Fisherman's hope
23 Man's nickname
24 Instantly tackle the quarterback
25 ___ out; relax & socialize
26 Without companions
27 Game of chance
28 Painkillers
29 Hombre's title
31 Lawn trees
32 Triangular sail
34 Cautious
36 Lads
37 Knotts & Rickles
39 Actor Michael
40 Remedy
42 Digger's need
43 Cattleman, often
45 ___ Haute, IN
46 Computers, for many
47 Isn't ___ to; can't
48 Aretha's music
49 Health nut's lunch, perhaps
50 "___ Mary, full of grace..."
52 ___ away; subtract
53 Suffix for cream or crock
55 Saloon
56 Recline

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Broke
Director
Fever
Girls
Gotta

Have It
Jungle
Lee
Leaves
Little

Malcolm X
Old Boy
Right
Spike
Thing

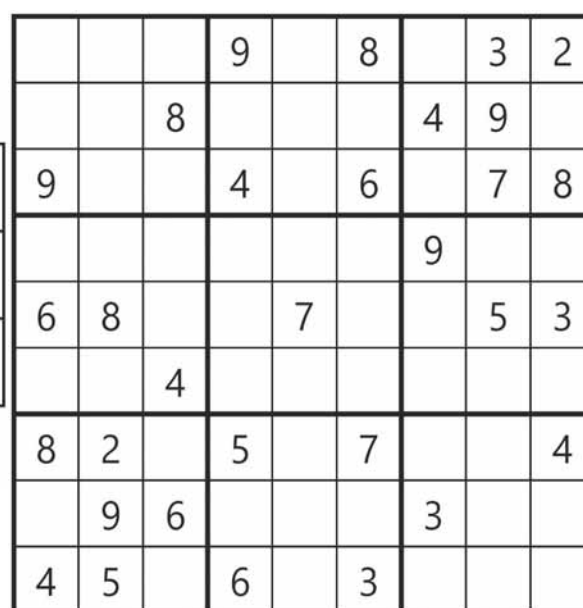
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